

INTRODUCTION

More than 68,000 probationers and parolees are supervised annually through the probation and parole services branch of the ministry of correctional services.

Probation and parole officers (PPOs) supervise clients 16 years of age* or older who have been placed on probation by the courts or granted parole from a correctional facility. PPOs have additional responsibilities, such as providing information to the courts by way of presentence reports which are used in the sentencing process, and, at the request of institution superintendents, supervising inmates who are allowed to participate in the temporary absence program (TAP).

There are more than 100 probation/parole offices throughout the province, ranging from a one-person office in locations like Red Lake in Northern Ontario to large offices in Metropolitan Toronto.

PROBATION

Probation may be granted to convicted offenders by the court either instead of or in addition to a term of incarceration. Probation terms may be as long as three years. The length of time is at the discretion of the court, as are the conditions in the order which must be met by the probationer. Generally, when probation is granted, the offender must report to a probation/parole officer. The officer's first obligation is to explain the probation order to the client. The officer must also monitor the probationer's behavior in the community and help the probationer modify attitudes, upgrade education or work skills, and accept medical attention or special treatment if necessary.

Not all adults granted probation require intensive counseling. For some, the appearance in court is a sufficient deterrent to keep them from becoming involved in further criminal behavior. Others require only minimal supervision and assistance, but some will require constant advice and counseling. The officers must arrange their caseload so that their skills are being put to the best possible use; i.e., those who need them the most receive the greatest amount of time.

Officers have obligations to the ministry, to the courts, and to their clients. The goals of the ministry must be met, the conditions in the probation order must be fulfilled, and the best interest of the client must be served.

Termination of probation occurs automatically when the probation order expires. However, an officer may recommend that the court terminate an order before its expiry date if the probationer has made a sincere effort to conform to its conditions.

PAROLE

Parole, unlike probation, is a means of releasing offenders from custody to serve the latter part of their sentence in the community. Parole is granted by the Ontario Board of Parole, which interviews parole applicants while they are still in custody.

Inmates serving sentences of six months to two years less a day, who have completed at least one-third of their sentence, are automatically eligible for consideration. Those with sentences of less than six months may apply for consideration by the Board.

Officers prepare pre-parole reports for each inmate which assist the Board in making its decision. Reports include such information as: plans for employment, level of education, place of residence, and the resources available in the community to help the inmate carry out the terms of parole.

The period immediately following release is often filled with uncertainties, and many parolees require the support of their probation/parole officer while they adjust to community life.

Parolees report to their officer at regular intervals, and checks are made to ensure that the parolees adhere to the conditions of parole.

PRESENTENCE REPORT

An important responsibility for officers is the preparation of presentence reports. These are requested by the courts to assist the judge in the decision-making process once the individual has been convicted. They include such information about the offender as: level of education, previous employment experience, particulars of the offence, family history, and future plans. Presentence reports are prepared only for individuals who have been found guilty of offences. The report may recommend whether or not the officer feels an offender is a suitable candidate for probation.

COMMUNITY SERVICE ORDERS (CSOs)

A community service order may be added as a condition of a probation order.

Probationers who receive CSOs are required to perform a specified number of hours of unpaid work. It may be directed to helping the community, such as assisting handicapped children, snow shoveling for the elderly, or working in a conservation area; or it may be a direct service to the victim of the crime, such as repairing the damage caused by vandalism.

CSOs are carried out during the probationer's leisure time. None of the work assigned jeopardizes jobs for which community members are paid.

Community service orders emphasize the use of probationers' skills and abilities and afford them the opportunity to provide a service to the community.

*Implementation of the provisions of the Young Offenders Act will raise the age of adult offenders from 16 to 18 years by April 1, 1985.

TEMPORARY ABSENCE PROGRAM (TAP)

The temporary absence program allows selected inmates to be absent from a correctional institution for rehabilitative or compassionate reasons. For instance, inmates who qualify for the program may work or study in the community, returning to the institution in the evening, or be allowed to visit home in times of family crisis.

Those earning an income pay toward their room and board at the institution as well as paying taxes and supporting their families. In some cases, they make restitution to the victims of their crimes.

Probation/parole officers assist institution staff by conducting investigations in the community to evaluate temporary absence applications. If the absence involves work or educational training, the officers may help to arrange a job interview or enrollment in school. When requested by the institution's superintendent, the officer will maintain a liaison with the employer or school to ensure that both parties are satisfied and that the conditions of the temporary absence agreement are being adhered to.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

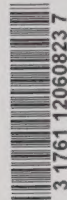
Community participation is an important part of the probation and parole service. Volunteer officers provide one-to-one supervision for clients as well as a link with the community.

Community agencies working in the corrections field may contract with the ministry on a fee-for-service basis, providing probationers and parolees with services which may not otherwise be available. There are more than 200 such contracts offering services from employment counseling and drug and alcohol abuse programs to Native awareness groups.



Ministry of
Correctional
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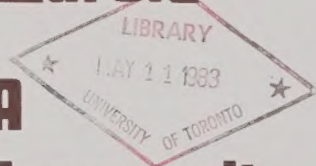
Honourable Nicholas G. Leluk
Minister
George R. Podrebarac
Deputy Minister



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**Probation
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